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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-elite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

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Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

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But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1930s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

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At the same time, as the Combaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were faintly stirring.

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I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of taste can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as distinct Europeans, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "brown" and "brun," not white and black.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredations were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomet," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of conversations made by Haitian élite to the author.

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that caste is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest.

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not.

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the

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565 494 177 • 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

544 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184 77 208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.